

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed April 22, 2007, has been received and its contents carefully considered. In the Office Action mailed April 22, 2007, Claims 2, 3, 9-20 stand rejected and Claim 4 is objected to. Applicants have thoroughly reviewed the outstanding Office Action including the Examiner's remarks and the references cited therein. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action.

Claims 2, 12-13, and 18-20 are cancelled. Claims 3, 4, 9, 11, 14, 15 are presently amended. No claims are added. As such, claims 3-4, 9-11, and 14-17 remain pending. All the pending claims at issue are believed to be patentable.

CLAIM REJECTION – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 12 recites the limitation “the mouth” in line 9 of claim 12. Claim 12 has been cancelled. However, Applicants have noted a similar lack of antecedent basis in the previously presented form of Claim 2, the limitations of which have herein been added to amended Claim 4 (as further discussed below), such that said amended Claim 4 recites, in part: “a resilient inwardly turned hook defining a recess in a mouth of said hook.” Accordingly, Applicant believes all pending claims are in accordance with 35 USC Sec. 112.

CLAIM REJECTION – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 2, 3, 9-13, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,247,852 to Schneider (Schneider). Without conceding the appropriateness of said rejection, Applicants herein cancel certain claims and amend others, to expedite the allowance of the pending claims (as further discussed below with regard to the Allowable Subject Matter of objected Claim 4).

CLAIM REJECTION – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider as applied to Claim 12 (now cancelled) and further in view of Oh. Without conceding the appropriateness of said rejection, Applicants herein cancel certain claims and amend others, to expedite the allowance of the pending claims (as further discussed below with regard to the Allowable Subject Matter of objected Claim 4).

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have herein amended Claim 4 to include all of the limitations of its previously presented base Claim 2. Claim 4 is therefore believed to be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to said claim be withdrawn.

Applicants have further amended dependent Claims 3, 9, 11, 14, and 15 to each depend on allowable amended Claim 4. Previously presented independent Claim 12 has been cancelled. The only remaining pending independent claim is therefore Claim 4. All other pending claims are dependent claims 3, 9-11, and 14-17, which each depend, directly or indirectly, from amended Claim 4. These claims recite additional limitations which, in conformity with the features of their corresponding independent claim, are not disclosed or suggested by the art of record. Since the independent Claim 4 is believed to be patentable, by definition, its dependent claims are also believed to be patentable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 USC Sec. 102/103 with regard to dependent claims 3, 9-11, and 14-17 be withdrawn.

All pending claims in the application are therefore believed to be allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036 with reference to Attorney Docket No. 59474.21780.

Respectfully submitted,

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